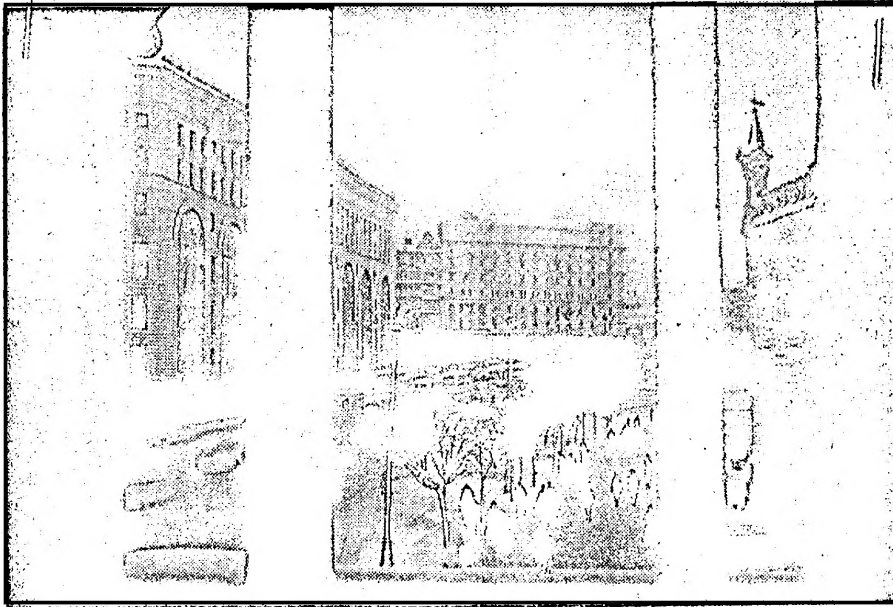


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CPYRGHT



Moscow's grimmest prison, the Lubyanka (centre), where Greville Wynne spent part of his term of imprisonment. And (left) Moscow's most cheerful toy store, "The Children's World."

Lights of the Lubyanka Prison

CPYRGHT

EVERYONE in Moscow knows the Lubyanka prison; and the Russians have a macabre joke about it. They say it is the tallest building in the Soviet Union. And why? "Why, because from its cellars you can see all the way to Siberia."

A pretty Stalinist fantasy. More factually, you really can see, just across Dzerzhinsky Square—so named in honour of the Polish Communist who founded the Soviet secret police—the great toy emporium called Detsky Mir, which also sells Russia's best clothes for children.

Here, just a stone's throw apart, are the outward and visible symbols of the Russians' split personality: the one segment grim, unbending and cruel—the other segment kind, and possessed of a passionate love for children, for whom nothing is too good.

The Lubyanka is a double-purpose building. It houses the K.G.B.—the Committee of State Security, which is the modern name for the organisation which has been known successively as the Cheka, the O.G.P.U., the N.K.V.D. and the N.K.G.B.

It also contains the toughest and most exclusive prison in the whole of the Soviet Union, which has held most of the better-known "enemies of the people" and foreigners arrested in Russia—including Greville Wynne and Gary Powers, the U-2 pilot.

The old part of this grey stone building was, before the Revolution, the headquarters of the Russian state insurance company "Rossiya." On the eve of the

purges of the 1930's it was providently extended, and three more storeys were added.

The Lubyanka is only two minutes' walk from the very centre of Moscow. It can be seen from the windows of the Metropole Hotel, from which the exclusive picture above was taken. But Intourist does not draw attention to it; and even now many Russian passers-by would rather cross to the other side of the road than walk in its shadow. No ice-cream or soft drink seller sets up shop outside it.

The Lubyanka does not look like a prison from the outside. One foreigner brought there at the end of the war commented: "What a fine hotel they've brought us to!", when he saw the entrance. They were his last recorded words.

Everyone who has been inside the Lubyanka and lived to tell the tale—and there are several such people living in London today—agrees on one thing: the complete silence that reigns within. All the corridors are thickly carpeted. Everyone, especially the permanent staff, speaks in a whisper.

One prisoner recorded this impression: "It was the complete silence that impressed me all the time. It was as though the whole building was holding its breath and was quite dead, as though it stood aside from time and space.

It was difficult to believe that the great city of Moscow was bubbling and humming and moving all round it."

The Lubyanka has special lifts divided in two. The prisoner's section is without windows, so that he cannot know to what floor he is being taken. The interrogation offices have leather padded doors, thick carpets and rich furnishings.

There are few accounts of the cellars of the Lubyanka, and with good reason. It is there that prisoners condemned to death were taken and shot in the back of the neck. One man who saw the cellars and survived spoke of the clinical cleanliness that prevailed there.

The ordinary cells, which open on to the inner courtyard, have steel shutters that admit only a thin ray of light. The corridors, along which a prisoner is taken on his way to interrogation, have little recesses at each corner. The prisoner is pushed into these if anyone else passes.

In his book "The Secret War," Sanche de Gramont relates: "Since Lubyanka is for political prisoners, different coloured lights shine on and off in the corridors to announce the passage of a prisoner so that he will not encounter a fellow inmate and tell his friends when and if he is released: 'Guess who I saw in Lubyanka?'"